

March 30, 2009 - Slaughter's National Women's Rights History Project Act Signed Into Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, March 30, 2009

Rep. Slaughter's National Women's Rights History Project Act Signed Into Law

President Obama Signs Omnibus Public Lands Act Which Includes Slaughter's Bill to Recognize Women Suffragists

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules and former Chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, today applauded the enactment of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, which includes legislation she authored, the National Women's Rights History Project Act. Rep. Slaughter's legislation will preserve and promote historic sites in Western New York and around the country that are critical to the suffrage movement and our nation's history.

"So many people forget that it was just 89 years ago that women were finally allowed to vote in this country," Rep. Slaughter said. "I am proud that President Obama has signed my bill to celebrate the historic events and recognize the important sites that served as the backdrop in the struggle for women's equality. This important legislation provides Americans with the chance to learn more about the heroines who changed history and opened the doors of opportunity for future generations of women."

Originally introduced in 2002 by Rep. Slaughter, the National Women's Rights History Project Act creates a drivable women's history trail, expands the national online database of women's history sites, and establishes a partnership network to fund relevant educational programs.

Rep. Slaughter's legislation is one of more than 160 bills included in the bipartisan omnibus lands bill, a package of provisions to expand federally protected land, water, and historic landmarks.

BACKGROUND

The National Women's Rights History Project Act does the following:

Creates a Women's History Trail: This bill will establish an auto-friendly trail linking women's suffrage movement sites between Syracuse, NY through the Finger Lakes region and to Rochester, NY. The route was designed to allow access to many of the most prominent sites of the women's movement, including Seneca Falls and Waterloo, where the first women's rights conventions were planned and held.

Expand National Online Registry of Key Women's History Sites: The bill will expand the current National Registry travel itinerary website, "Places Where Women Made History," to include additional historic sites. Currently, only 44 percent of the 298 sites nationwide that are relevant to women's rights are listed on the national register of historic places. Of those, only 57 are national historic landmarks. Moreover, many of the register sites have not been evaluated for their association with women's history but rather are on the registry because they are significant in other areas.

Establishes a National Women's Rights History Project Partnership: The bill will require the Department of Interior to establish a partnership-based network to offer financial and technical assistance for interpretive and educational program development of national women's rights history. The Project Partnership would be managed by a non-governmental entity to provide grants and technical assistance for educational and preservation purposes.

More information on the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act:

This bipartisan omnibus public lands bill is a package of more than 160 bills that enjoy wide support in Congress. Many of these bills have previously passed through the House of Representatives. It includes measures introduced in the last Congress by both Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate

Many of the provisions have been developed with extensive collaboration at federal, state, county, and local levels, in conjunction with elected officials, businesses, community leaders, outdoor enthusiasts, and other stakeholders.

Among its many provisions, this omnibus bill permanently codifies the National Landscape Conservation System; creates two million new acres of wilderness across 9 states; establishes 3 new national park units; designates 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers; designates a National Monument and 4 National Conservation Areas; protects world-class hunting land in the Wyoming Range; and recognizes new Historic Sites and Heritage Areas.

The conservation designations in the bill will provide important economic benefits for rural economies across the United States. By providing jobs in recreation and tourism, increasing local property values, and providing attractive places for residents to live and work, wilderness designation provides significant benefits to local economies. Nationwide, outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion to the U.S. economy, while supporting 6.5 million jobs.

This bill is an authorization bill and does not appropriate any money from the federal treasury.

###